

Goal 3: No Illinois citizen will be denied an opportunity for a college education because of financial need.

What is Joliet Junior College now doing that advances this goal and related actions?

The Financial Aid Office has taken a well defined customer service orientation within the college. The office has provided financial aid workshops at local high schools and for the community at large. In response to stakeholder suggestions, the office has increased its staffing, is open at night four days a week, and provides Internet access to many of the required forms. A listing of scholarships and awards is updated regularly and also provided on the Internet. In the 2003 graduate survey, the financial aid office was rated as excellent or good by over three-fourths of the respondents. The Financial Aid Office seems to be very successful at executing its customer service orientation. The financial award numbers have increased slightly over the past three years and are in line with other community colleges in Illinois. The college's Financial Aid Office has been a beacon of good will as it has outreached to local communities and assisted students and parents with college funding (even if the students were actually going to attend other institutions.)

The Early School Leavers' Program is designed for high school non-completers, sixteen to twenty-one years of age, who want to complete their secondary level of education and participate in work-based experiences. Those youth who demonstrate a willingness to meet both objectives and who are able to benefit (9th grade reading level) from such a program are selected through an interview process.

Housing, especially affordable housing, has always been a concern for college students who live in suburban areas like Joliet. This is especially true for students who attend specialized programs (Vet Tech, Agriculture/Horticulture, Culinary Arts) and come from outside District 525. Past JJC students who attended the college, but whose permanent residence was not in a reasonable commuting distance took up residence in areas that are unsafe and inconvenient to the college. The Joliet Junior College Foundation entered into a fiduciary relationship with Century Corporation and built a gated community, a 300-bed unit adjacent to campus. This facility has its own security, and many amenities such as laundry and fitness facilities. The complex was filled long before the fall, 2002 semester began. Although the facility has been plagued with some start up concerns and disciplinary issues, philosophically the college has made a good move in providing affordable housing in order to facilitate greater opportunity for students with financial needs.

The Division of Adult and Family Services (DAFS) and the Institute of Economic Technology (IET) has established the college's One-Stop Center. The Center, providing services for some seven to eight hundred clients annually, has established linkages with area businesses offering classes in workforce

preparation, GED, and occupational training. Outreach activities include frequent presentations at Will County's Workforce Development Center and our part of the new program of support defined under WIA. DAFS continues to provide information, through partnerships with many local non-profit and governmental agencies, for adults and families who receive some form of public assistance, such as TANF, Social Security income (SSI), food stamps, etc. Many families are not aware that they are eligible for other benefits including health care for themselves and their families as well as other services. IET has created several occupational training programs (approved for WIA funding) which are delivered in Spanish and open opportunities not available to non-English speaking clients.

The college has continued its Student Emergency Fund for students who may not have enough money for a meal on campus; are having difficulty paying their utilities; cannot afford bus transportation. This program allows a student to ask any JJC employee for assistance. The student can get a meal voucher, bus fare, or even emergency money for class supplies. The College Bookstore permits bookstore loans to students who cannot afford their textbook cost at the beginning of the semester. Although only a short-term solution, it can be a critical link for students with temporary financial need.

The Joliet Junior College Foundation has continued its impressive record for providing scholarship funds for over 600 students each year. Even in the recent tough economic times for investments the Foundation has continued its outreach to students who have demonstrated academic ability but may also have financial need.

What specific actions does Joliet Junior College intend to undertake in the coming year (or two) to advance this goal and related actions?

The Financial Aid Office will continue its outreach to students through providing programs for parents of high school students in the evening at many area high schools. The Director of Financial Aid has recently joined the recruitment team, a body that plans and directs recruitment activities.

A new series of events, Discover JJC, is combination recruitment, financial aid workshop on-campus activity to allow prospective students and parents the opportunity to gain the information needed to make a decision about college.

Financial Aid and Admissions/Recruitment staff members will continue to participate in cross-training activities. When recruiters visit high schools they always carry financial aid and scholarship materials with them.

A Housing Task Force was started this summer to work with Century Corporation to improve their success in the new residential units. Made up of local officials from city government, city police, college administration, and Century employees, the Task Force seeks to improve the experience for all students.